

28 August 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Taylor
Mr. Carver
Mr. Dirks

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1. Herewith a revised Introduction.

2. After looking over the package, and discovering that there are no appropriate editors available, I conclude:

--Executive Summary is a good start. We should go no further until the other papers are further along.

--I have taken Organization and Management with me to Annisquam and will be back Wed. AM with a new draft. Much of the present paper will become a series of Annexes.

--I cannot cope with Secrecy etc. Recommend someone take a fresh crack next week. See especially Carver's useful notes, which I have passed on to Taylor.

3. I shall be here Wednesday the 3rd, and will then disappear without trace until at least 17 September.

Richard Lehman

~~SECRET~~R. Lehman
28 August 1975

The Central Intelligence Agency and a national intelligence system were created by the National Security Act of 1947. They grew out a consensus among the national elite--in Congress, the Executive, and the national media--that wartime experience and the emergence of the United States as the first superpower required the creation of a permanent national intelligence capability--"No more Pearl Harbors." Today that system is under attack from the Congress and the media, and the consensus that out of which it grew has been seriously eroded. Moreover, 28 years of experience and improvement have demonstrated that the intelligence provisions of the act are obsolete and are too weak to carry the system that has evolved over that period. It is the purpose of these papers to examine the problems that beset American intelligence today and to recommend ways in which consensus might be restored and structure modernized. Both are necessary, and the latter cannot be achieved without the former.

In 1947 Congress had in mind the creation of a small super-agency, independent of any major arm of government, to "correlate and evaluate" the product of the existing, largely military, agencies in the field of strategic

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intelligence, a term which it understood to cover primarily military intentions and capabilities of potential enemies. It placed on the Director of Central Intelligence what it thought were modest responsibilities and provided him with authorities that appeared commensurate. Twenty eight years later, however, it is apparent that the responsibilities are enormous and the authorities are far from adequate.

It was not possible in 1947 to see:

--That by 1975 the national intelligence system would become a central part of government itself, probably larger in the peace of 1975 than in the war of 1945.

--That the definition of national intelligence would expand to cover the entire range of diplomacy, commerce, economics, and sociological and political trends, as well as the more traditional military disciplines.

--That the extraction of intelligence from closed societies would require the development of large, complex, extremely expensive collection systems, and that efficient employment of these systems in the national interest would require central, unified management.

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--That the interests of the Department of Defense, particularly in these systems, would grow to outweigh by several times the DCI's authorities.

--That by bureaucratic accident the new CIA would incorporate the operational elements of OSS, but not its Research and Analysis Branch, thus leaving CIA exceedingly weak in its primary functions, with a staff heavily oriented toward espionage and covert action.

--That the onset of the Cold War would create a critical need for a national covert action arm, and that a CIA so manned would fill this need at some further cost to its original mission, and would come to be publicly identified with covert action rather than with "correlation and evaluation."

--That the silence and total secrecy traditionally maintained by governments over their intelligence activities would prove impossible for a system grown so large and so complex in its technology, and inappropriate under the American Constitution for a system playing so pervasive and so critical a role in governmental decisions vital to the national interest.

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In hindsight, the last may have been the fundamental error. The framers of the Act evidently believed that the British intelligence tradition could be maintained in America; the OSS-trained cadre of CIA were encouraged to follow a path that was natural to them. Total secrecy was established, but at a cost only now becoming apparent: it prevented the education of the public and all but a few Congressmen in the realities of intelligence, and protected intelligence itself from the oversight that would have required of it a greater sensitivity to public interests.

In these circumstances, intelligence had as political base only a small group of senior Congressmen who both protected it from and blocked its access to their younger and more liberal colleagues. Thus when the national elite of the 1940-1965 period was undercut by the Vietnam War and by Watergate, and these Congressmen grew too old, too few and too weak to maintain their control, intelligence was exposed to a rapidly growing new generation of national leadership that shared neither its traditions nor its view of the world. The oversight of intelligence became a battlefield for the generational struggle in Congress.

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This new generation, rejecting many of the doctrines of its predecessors, has tended to return to the doctrines of an earlier generation yet. The more extreme of its members, rejecting any suggestion of realpolitik, would have us reestablish a foreign policy of goodwill to all. A public opinion deeply attracted by doctrines rooted in our innocent past and repelled by the realities of the present finds it increasingly difficult to believe in the threat posed by powerful enemies, even more in the concept that another power, acting in its national interest, can so damage ours as to require us to respond.

To the revisionist intelligence seems of little value. Worse, secrecy is intrinsically immoral. Thus many of the new elite in Congress and the media initially approach intelligence from a hostile position, and their hostility is beginning to affect a public unsophisticated in intelligence matters.

The national turmoil that has fostered these new attitudes has had an especially damaging effect on intelligence security, and this in turn has created for the public a highly distorted image of intelligence. Resistance to the Vietnam war led to some breakdown in intelligence discipline, as intelligence was leaked for advantage in partisan debate. Each leak encouraged another, until the security of all intelligence operations had

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been jeopardized. When exposed to the investigative reporting in vogue since Watergate, the dike gave way. Many intelligence activities were exposed for the sake of exposure, or at the behest of a "higher morality", many skeletons--real and imagined--were dragged from the intelligence closet. The disclosure that a few of these activities had in fact been illegal and others injudicious gave ammunition to those hostile to intelligence itself, and a public encouraged by recent events to believe the worst of its government was tempted to accept at face value the wildest exaggerations and the most far-fetched imputation of impropriety to legitimate activities.

The American people have thus been given a picture of their intelligence system that stresses its most lurid aspects and exaggerates its weaknesses; they had been given no account of its strengths, or even of the need for its existence. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that public dismay goes beyond shock at illegal mail openings or jackass experiments with LSD. The public has become at least as much uneasy with the whole idea of large organizations working in secrecy among us to ends it does not understand.

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Moreover, the unease is as great with the "large" as it is with the "secret". The intelligence officer, handicapped by his own security discipline and forced to speak through hostile media, has found it impossible to establish a dialogue with the public.

Nonetheless the intelligence officer must cope with the reality of the world about him. For him, the idea of a foreign policy for the United States rising above national interests has been obsolete ever since the Industrial Revolution set the world on the road to strategic warfare, economic interdependence, and ideological struggle not matched since the Reformation. He knows the United States needs intelligence, and he knows that today US intelligence systems must be both large and secret.

To the intelligence officer, if Pearl Harbor was a valid reason for creating a national intelligence system in 1947, the possibility of a Soviet first strike is an equally valid reason for strengthening it today. The argument that nuclear war is unthinkable, or that the construction of nuclear armaments is driven by the military-industrial complex, is to him largely irrelevant; as long as the USSR continues to build and improve its strategic forces, the US must know how and why.

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To the intelligence officer, the knowledge that the world's resources are finite, and that population growth is rapidly overtaking supplies of food and energy, means that national interests once considered important will soon become vital. When there is not enough to go around, intelligence on the capabilities and intentions of producers and consumers becomes more essential to the survival of the United States than intelligence on Japanese intentions was in 1941.

To the intelligence officer, the turmoil afflicting most of the world in many cases directly affects American interests; he sees in this new demands for intelligence on the political and social forces in foreign societies.

This, then, is the dilemma for American intelligence in 1975. We see the nation's requirement for foreign intelligence as greater than ever, yet we have failed to win public acceptance, partly because public attitudes have changed, partly because our own secrecy has prevented us from educating the public to the need for intelligence and to the costs, moral and monetary, of getting it. Public and Congressional concern, however, is only part of the problem.

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Since 1947 we have evolved procedures and developed techniques far beyond any conceived at that time. We have added a new dimension to the concept of intelligence, and have demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Executive--over a number of Administrations--that a copious flow of objective national intelligence is central to the conduct of national security policy in today's complex world. But our efforts have often been wasteful and our product sometimes mediocre, to a considerable extent because the organization and management of the national intelligence system have kept pace neither with the complexity of its techniques nor the scope of the requirements placed upon it. The Act of 1947 provides the DCI with authorities and administrative structure quite inadequate for the fulfillment of his assigned mission under the conditions of 1975. Rather, he attempts to fulfill it through an accretion of independent jerry-built structures, lacking statutory basis, in which he exercises varying degrees of influence. In short, the act of 1947 would be out of date even if the system had total public acceptance.

The problem then has two parts. The system must be made more efficient, but it must also be made more

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acceptable. This means that efficiency cannot be achieved simply by rationalization and centralization of authority. Rather, it must be accompanied by provisions for external controls and internal checks and balances, perhaps at some cost to efficiency, in order to develop public confidence. The public must be satisfied not only that a computer-driven monster does not threaten the state from within, but that such a monster cannot be created. At the same time, the public must be brought to accept, and thus controls must be designed, to provide secrecy for those intelligence operations that cannot succeed without it.

This is not impossible. The public accepts--because it understands--the need for secrecy in a wide range of private and public matters, from the lawyer-client relationship to the protection of patents. It accepts--when it understands--the need to commit large public funds to purposes that give at best only indirect benefit to the taxpayer. We must seek to reestablish that understanding.

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